CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   An e-mail client, comprising:

message composition logic operable to compose a message to at least one recipient;

write protect logic operable to protect the message against subsequent alteration by said at least one recipient.

2.   The client of claim 1, wherein the write protect logic comprises conversion logic operable to change the file from a text file to a picture file.

3.   The client of claim 2, wherein the picture file is included as an inline image within the message.

4.   The client of claim 2, wherein the picture file is stored on a central server for retrieval by the recipient.

5.   The client of claim 2, wherein the picture file is included as an attachment to the message.

6.   The client of claim 2, wherein the picture file is a joint photographic experts group (JPEG) file.

7.   The client of claim 2, wherein the picture file is a graphics image format (GIF) file.

1   8.   The client of claim 1, wherein the write protect logic comprises

2 conversion logic operable to change the file from a text file to a portable document

3 format (PDF) file.

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1   9.   The client of claim 1, wherein the composition logic is operable to allow

2 the user to compose a new message, a reply to a received message or forward a received

3 message.

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1   10.   The client of claim 1, wherein the client further comprises a user interface

2 operable to allow the user to select a plurality of options, including enabling the write

3 protect logic.

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1   11.   A method of protecting e-mail, the method comprising the steps of:

2   enabling a user to draft a message; and

3   converting the message into a write-protected format such that recipients

4   are inhibited from altering the content.

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1   12.   The method of claim 11, wherein the write-protected format comprises a

2   portable document format (PDF) file.

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1   13.   The method of claim 11, wherein the write-protected format comprises a

2   graphics image format (GIF) file.

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1   14.   The method of claim 11, wherein the write-protected format comprises a

2   joint photographic experts group (JPEG) file.

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1   15.   The method of claim 11, the method further comprising:

2   enabling the user to choose whether to protect the message or not;

3   wherein converting the message into a write-protected format is performed

4   responsive to user choice.

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1   16.   The method of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises sending

2   the message to at least one recipient in the write-protected format.

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1   17.   The method of claim 16, wherein the message is stored on a central server

2   for viewing by the user.

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1   18.   The method of claim 16, wherein the message is downloaded to a

2   computer for viewing by the user.

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1   19.   The method of claim 16, wherein the message is included as an inline

2   image file.

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1   20.   The method of claim 16, wherein the message is included as an

2   attachment.

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